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# Soviets spent years readying space defense

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The mounting campaign rhetoric against the U.S. "militarization of space" by its Strategic Defense Initiative ("star wars") — and the Soviet proposal for a "star peace" project — obscures one important fact.

The Soviet Union has prepared for two decades to "militarize" space.

Since the 1960s, the Soviet Union has had "troops of air defense," with active sub-commands, for the conduct of military operations in space. The Soviet government declared a policy to provide its citizens with defense against all threats, including nuclear war.

Comprehension of this commitment to strategic defense — and analysis of the Soviet system of diversified weapons system — requires first a comprehension of Soviet doctrine.

The Soviets consider the U.S. launching of a "pre-emptive first strike," with the use of its entire strategic nuclear arsenal, to be their most formidable challenge. Repulsing a surprise attack became a priority. Only two months ago, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, chief of the Soviet "unified permanent wartime combat command," said that "Soviet military doctrine requires not merely defending ourselves, confronting the aggressor with passive means and methods, but also the ability to inflict upon him crushing retaliatory strikes and to destroy him in any situation."

The anti-rocket command extends the Soviet air-defense capabilities to countering the nuclear threat. As long ago as 1967, the Soviets explained that this command was "designated for detecting, intercepting, and destroying enemy ballistic rockets in the trajectory of their flight and creating jamming for them."

The prime mission of the rocket command is to obtain data to warn of an impending strike, manage the information, and repulse the attack.

Once the Soviets detect an impending strike, the rocket command takes over the required weapon systems and launch installations.

The anti-space defense command conducts combat operations, in space by destroying enemy missiles, including those for reconnaissance, in their flight orbits.

In the 1980s, however, this second command has focused on the destruction of the U.S. space-based satellite systems used for intelligence and reconnaissance gathering, as well as communication satellites. The sudden and effective destruction of these satellites would not only expose the United States to a Soviet first strike, but would considerably reduce the U.S. ability to retaliate effectively.

In 1982, the Soviets introduced a complex system not so different in principle

from the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative. The Soviets explained that in order "to struggle against missiles which have already been launched" it would have to detect, discriminate, intercept, and destroy enemy rockets — precisely what President Reagan intends "star wars" to do.

The Soviets have been testing anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon systems over these past two decades with varying success. The Soviets already have most or all of the components required for a successful anti-satellite weapon system. They have apparently been developing two such systems simultaneously.

The first, a near-term project, is a large missile. Its booster is based on the technology of the Soviet BL-10, a new supersonic air-launched cruise missile. The Soviets rely heavily on proven and available technologies, although this means that their versions of the missiles will be larger and more cumbersome than American counterparts. Simultaneously, the Soviets are developing a smaller missile that would fit under a fighter-interceptor, most likely the Su-27 Flanker, the MiG-25 Foxbat or the MiG-31 Foxhound.

The Soviet Union already has the required technology for the ASAT booster and its radar. Their primary chal-

lenge is the development of the miniaturized missile's guidance-homing system. With the success of the U.S. testing of its ASAT, the Soviets are expected to intensify their effort to acquire the U.S. technology required to complete their own.

In recent years, the Soviets have been testing an unmanned version of a reusable space plane that resembles a mini-Shuttle. A manned version of this

mini-Shuttle will serve as the much-discussed satellite interceptor, which will use impact-missiles to destroy enemy satellites. The use of a manned system will greatly simplify for the Soviets the problem of target acquisition and homing, enhancing operational flexibility.

U.S. Air Force Gen. George Keegan warned some time ago that the Soviets have for over 20 years concentrated on the development of what they consider to be the ultimate weapon, both offensive and defensive, the ground-based directed

energy laser weapon. The Soviets already have two military installations in Central Asia that include ground-based lasers. The current system, which has been tested and proven, can already be used to either blind enemy satellites or even to destroy them.

The available technology, along with technology now being perfected, goes far toward a near-term goal of using such installations, along with space-based guidance and reflector satellites, as a major ballistic missile defense system. Once a sufficiently powerful particle beam is developed, a similar space-based guidance and reflector system can be used for directing a ground-launched beam to objectives on enemy land.

Theoretical studies have led the Soviets to consider the particle beam a viable technology, but there is no clear indication that they are close to the deployment of such an offensive weapon system.

In June 1982, the Soviets held a major exercise that provided the West with concrete proof of Soviet integrated offensive-defensive nuclear capabilities. The operation was held to test the Soviets' ability to succeed in what they believe to be a credible war scenario: A simultaneous nuclear first strike against the United States, using inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and against

Western Europe, using intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs).

The first strike against the United States would be followed by the destruction of the U.S. satellites, especially those required for target locating and a counterstrike.

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On June 6, the Soviets launched their Kosmos-1375 satellite. Then, on June 18, all within seven hours, the Soviets launched two SS-11 intercontinental ballistic missiles, an SS-20 inter-regional ballistic missile, the Kosmos-1379 satellite, an SS-N-8/SS-N-18 from a Delta submarine, and two ABM-3 anti-ballistic missile weapons against the ICBM RVs.

Kosmos-1379 intercepted and "destroyed" Kosmos-1375.

When the SSBNs were launched in the second strike, the new-generation ABMs successfully intercepted the missiles representing a U.S. retaliatory strike.

The entire exercise was controlled through a single, fully-integrated command system involving command elements in the Soviet Union and in space — unequivocal proof that the Soviets consider "star wars" operations to be a vital component of their nuclear strategy.

Marshal Ogarkov recently discussed the ramifications of the surplus nuclear potential of both sides. He said that the stockpiling of nuclear weapons might lead to a doctrinal deadlock, under which the opposing sides in a nuclear war would engage in a lengthy effort toward mutual attrition.

But this, he said, would not change the outcome — the inevitable victory of the "peace-loving forces" of the Soviet Union — but would increase considerably the losses on both sides.

To break this deadlock, he wants to develop credible ballistic-missile defenses and anti-satellite defense systems while also building a novel offensive system, such as one based on particle beams.

Marshal Ogarkov has defined the current weapons development as "a profound revolution ... in military affairs," and emphasized that its prime significance is "the development of thermonuclear weapons, rapid advances in electronics, development of weapons based on new physical principles."

Since 1982, the Soviets have demonstrated a staunch commitment to developing the ability to fight and win a war both on earth and in space. This is the project they call "Star Peace".

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